

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 TRSE-00 /077 W
-----000151 062049Z /45

R 051716Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2527
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
RUDTCAMEMBASSY LONDON 5859
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6109

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJECT: SOARES TRIKES BACK

REF: (A) LISBON 5994 (DTG 021806Z AUG 77), (B) LISBON 6026
(DTG 031613Z AUG 77), (C) LISBON A-219

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER SOARES AND THE SOCIALISTS HAVE
CHARACTERIZED THE RECENT PCP DECLARATIONS AS A DIRECT ATTACK
ON THE PRESIDENCY. SOARES HAS PUT THE FINAL TOUCH
ON THE PS-PCP SPLIT BY DRAWING THE BATTLE LINE WITH
PCP ANTIDEMOCRATIC MANEUVERS AND EXTRACONSTITUTIONAL
AGITATION ON ONE SIDE AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT AND
LEGITIMACY OF THE ASSEMBLY ON THE OTHER. END SUMMARY.

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1. SOARES RESPONDS: IN AN AUGUST 4 PRESS CONFERENCE PRIME
MINISTER SOARES RESPONDED TO THE PCP DEMANDS FOR THE
GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION, THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY,
AND THE SUSPENSION OF RECENT LEGISLATIVE ACTS. HIGHLIGHTS
INCLUDED:
-- IF NECESSARY, THE PS IS PREPARED TO MOBILIZE THE
PORTUGUESE PEOPLE TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY AS THE PARTY DID

IN 1975;

-- IF THE PCP WANTS TO PROVOKE A DICTATORSHIP OF THE RIGHT, THE WORKERS AND THE PEOPLE WILL BE THE FIRST TO SUFFER WHILE CUNHAL AND HIS COLLEAGUES RETAIN THE OPTION OF EXILE IN MOSCOW. (AS IF ON CUE, CUNHAL DEPARTED FOR MOSCOW THE MORNING OF AUGUST 5--REPORTEDLY FOR MEDICAL CHECKUP.);

-- THE PS WILL MAINTAIN A POLICY OF NONALLIANCE BUT WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE RECENT PS/PSD UNDERSTANDING. THE UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, IS LIMITED TO CONSULTATIVE EXCHANGE;

-- IN LIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT'S UNIQUE AUTHORITY TO DISMISS THE GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, THE PCP PROPOSALS CONSTITUTE A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO EANES;

-- A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE WOULD REQUIRE PCP/PSD/CDS SUPPORT IN THE ASSEMBLY: AN "UNHOLY ALLIANCE" SOARES CONSIDERS UNLIKELY.

2. MALAISE IN PCP RANKS: IN DISCUSSION WITH EMBOFF, SOCIALIST PARTY INSIDER JAIME GAMA SAID THAT PCP SOUNDINGS INDICATE A LACK OF WORKER SUPPORT FOR A GENERAL STRIKE. PS SOURCES AMONG WORKERS HAVE ALSO REPORTED WORKER CONCERN THAT THE NEW PCP LINE WILL THROW THEM INTO THE FRONT LINES AT THE RISK OF THEIR JOBS: A FEAR THE SOCIALISTS PLAN TO EXPLOIT.

3. PS COOPERATION WITH PSD: GAMA EXPLAINED THAT PS-PSD COOPERATION COULD RANGE FROM A PARLIAMENTARY AGREEMENT TO A CONFIDENTIAL

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FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL COALITION. DURING THE DEBATE ON AGRARIAN REFORM, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PS AND PSD HAD ARRIVED AT THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDINGS:

-- SPOILS: THE PSD WOULD NAME SOME DIRECTORS OF NATIONALIZED ENTERPRISES, WILL HAVE A VOICE IN GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION DECISIONS THIS FALL, AND WILL PROBABLY RECEIVE SOME CIVIL GOVERNORSHIPS;

-- LABOR COOPERATION: THE PS IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO COOPERATION WITH THE PSD IN LABOR AND TRADE UNION EDUCATION. PSD VICE PRESIDENT RUI MACHETE AND LABOR MINISTER MALDONADO GONELHA WILL MEET SOON TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF AID-FUNDED SUPPORT FOR TRADE UNION EDUCATION;

-- REVISED PLAN: THE GOVERNMENT'S MEDIUM-TERM PLAN WILL BE REVISED AND PLANNING SECRETARY MANUELA SILVA WILL BE REPLACED;

-- TRUCE ON THE AZORES: THE SOARES GOVERNMENT WILL ACCELERATE THE TRANSFER OF CABINET RESPONSIBILITIES TO REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND BOTH PARTIES WILL ESCHEW POLEMICS ON THE AZORES AND MADEIRA;

-- INFLUENCE IN MEDIA: THE PSD WILL BE GIVEN A GREATER INFLUENCE IN THE MEDIA.

4. COMMENT: SOARES HAS PUT THE FINAL TOUCH ON THE PS-PCP SPLIT. HIS RESPONSE DRAWS THE LINES OF BATTLE BETWEEN PCP

ANTIDEMOCRATIC MANEUVERS AND EXTRACONSTITUTIONAL AGITATION ON
THE ONE HAND AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENCY AND
LEGITIMACY OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THE OTHER.
DESPITE SOARES'S OPTIMISM, THE SOCIALISTS WILL HAVE TO COME TO
TERMS WITH THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION IN THE ASSEMBLY. HOWEVER
IN ANY STREET CONFRONTATION WITH THE PCP, THE GOVERNMENT CAN
COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION, THE
PRESIDENT, AND THE ARMED FORCES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, PRESIDENT, OPPOSITION PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LISBON06109
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770283-0381
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770893/aaaadaxv.tel
Line Count: 124
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: dcf96f61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LISBON 5994, 77 LISBON 6026
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1700110
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOARES TRIKES BACK
TAGS: PINT, PO, OCP, (SOARES, MARIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/dcf96f61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009